

VZCZCXRO3889

OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #2150/01 1921403

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

O 101403Z JUL 08

FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8248

INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002150

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/31/2018

TAGS: PGOV KDEM PTER I2

SUBJECT: RRT ERBIL: KNA DEPUTY SPEAKER UPSET WITH SRSG DI MISTURA

REF: A. (A) BAGHDAD 1831
 1B. (B) 07 BAGHDAD 4107

Classified By: PRT Leader Jess Bailey; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

This is an Erbil Regional Reconstruction Team message.

11. (C) Summary and comment: Dr. Kemal Kerkuki, Deputy Speaker of the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) and head of the KNA Article 140 Committee, told RRTOff July 6 that UN SRSG Staffan di Mistura has tried to reach him by telephone, but he refused the calls. Kerkuki claimed di Mistura had "lied" to him and is no longer viewed as an honest broker in resolving Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs). RRTOff stressed the importance of maintaining an open dialogue, particularly in view of di Mistura's July 10-11 visit to Erbil. Despite the heated rhetoric, Kerkuki will likely remain a key figure in discussions with the UN, since KRG President Barzani has affirmed publicly several times that the KNA must approve any decisions on DIBs. Comment: Kerkuki did meet di Mistura in Erbil July 10 (septel). His pique should be taken as symptomatic of the highly charged DIBs issue. While Kerkuki may continue to play the bad cop, he ultimately takes his marching orders from president Barzani. End Summary and comment.

12. (C) Dr. Kemal Kerkuki, Deputy Speaker of the Kurdistan National Assembly (KNA) and head of the KNA Article 140 Committee, told RRTOff July 6 that UN SRSG di Mistura has tried to reach him by telephone, but he has refused the calls. Kerkuki said that di Mistura had "lied to him" and that he no longer viewed di Mistura as an honest broker in resolving Disputed Internal Boundaries (DIBs). Kerkuki outlined four "mistakes" di Mistura made in preparing the Phase I report on DIBs, which echo the complaints previously made by KRG senior leadership (Ref A). Kerkuki complained that di Mistura told the KNA in a special session that the results of the 2005 election would be considered in making recommendations (Ref B), but then only used them selectively to favor non-Kurd positions. For example, he alleged, UNAMI reports cited the 2005 election results to justify the decision to recommend that the Government of Iraq consider Mandali, where the Kurdistan Alliance did not receive a majority, as belonging to Diyala Governorate, but labeled the 2005 elections &fraudulent in al-Hamdaniya and Qaraj sub-district of Makhmour, in which the majority of the population voted in favor of the Kurdistan Alliance. &Why did di Mistura use the election results when Arabs benefit, yet call them fraudulent when the Kurds could benefit from the results,8 Kerkuki asked.

13. (C) Kerkuki also took offense at the report's negative reference to fuel truck deliveries that pass through Erbil from Bayji refinery to Mosul. He said that trucks cross Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) territory because of the security offered, and the KRG would be much happier if the trucks did not pass through Erbil, given the massive security threat posed. However, to facilitate fuel delivery to Mosul,

the KRG took on the risk. (KRG Minister of State for Interior Karim Sinjari also expressed these sentiments in a meeting with Senior Advisor Krajeski in early June.)

¶4. (C) Third, Kerkuki expressed disbelief that di Mistura could have miscalculated so seriously as to encourage Kurdish forces to withdraw from Hamdaniya, where they have been protecting minority communities. The Kurdish Peshmerga took great risks and stepped forward to protect the Yazidi community after the devastating Al Qaida attack in 2007, he said. The Kurdish forces have also protected Christians from persecution and intimidation, he added, which di Mistura failed to acknowledge. Kerkuki concluded that if Kurdish forces were withdrawn, minority communities would again be attacked by terrorists from Mosul. Kerkuki's final point was that di Mistura should not have included Akre district as part of the proposal. Akre belongs to the KRG, he noted, as outlined in the Iraqi Constitution, approved by over 80 percent of Iraqi voters. He said the Akre discussion in the report demonstrated UNAMI and di Mistura's failure to understand Iraq's history and agreements previously reached. Finally he noted that di Mistura did not appropriately acknowledge the great suffering of the Kurds during Saddam Hussein's regime.

¶5. (C) RRTOff reminded Kerkuki of the importance of continuing dialogue, and the unique opportunity provided by UNAMI and USG engagement in support of resolving DIBs at this time. Kerkuki responded by saying that he has been waiting for KRG President Barzani's return to discuss next steps on Article 140. (Kerkuki received a call from Massoud Barzani's office about scheduling a meeting during RRTOffs

BAGHDAD 00002150 002 OF 002

visit.) When probed by RRTOff to describe what di Mistura had "lied about" Kerkuki responded that di Mistura had made it clear when he met the KNA in December 2007 that the UN's role would be to provide technical advice only. However, he said, it was becoming increasingly clear that di Mistura has positioned himself to negotiate a political agreement to resolve the DIBs. Kerkuki ended the discussion by noting that a referendum must be held to resolve DIBs, and that no political agreement would be acceptable.

¶6. (C) Comment: Although Kerkuki told us he would shut off communication with di Mistura, his threat was never very realistic. Whatever his personal feelings of pique, Kerkuki gets marching orders from President Barzani (and found himself in a July 10 meeting with di Mistura in Erbil). Kerkuki has assumed the bad cop role in representing KRG interests on DIBs, and his long recitations of Kurdish suffering don't facilitate compromise, but his views substantively reflect those of many senior KRG officials. In addition, as KNA's deputy speaker, Kerkuki does maintain a position of authority; President Barzani has made clear his decision that any decision on DIBs must be approved by the KNA. End Comment.

CROCKER